

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 276

By Brown

A RESOLUTION to recognize and praise the achievements of the Chattanooga Public Education Foundation, the Benwood Initiative and the Osborne Fellows Initiative.

WHEREAS, leaders in Chattanooga and Hamilton County have correctly recognized that good public education is at the heart of a thriving community; during his first year in office Chattanooga Mayor Bob Corker formed the Community Education Alliance (CEA) as an advisory group of successful business and community leaders committed to raising educational achievement in the community's priority elementary schools; and

WHEREAS, the CEA priority elementary schools are Calvin Donaldson, Clifton Hills, East Lake, East Side, Hardy, Hillcrest, Howard, Orchard Knob and Woodmore; the CEA initiatives are founded on the premise that all children can learn, and that committed teachers and principles can advance this goal; and

WHEREAS, to this end, CEA focuses on the recruitment and retention of high performing teachers through the use of incentives, resulting from strategic and coordinated offerings in conjunction with the Benwood Foundation, the W. F. Osborne Foundation, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Hamilton County Department of Education, Lyndhurst Foundation and the Public Education Foundation; these incentives include cash incentives, housing incentives and advanced degree opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Public Education Foundation (PEF), partnering with Hamilton County Schools, in the last several years has resulted in dramatic gains in reading in urban elementary schools, more challenging and engaging high schools, and better trained teachers and administrators; its two major multi-million dollar five-year initiatives are fostering leadership development, highly effective teaching, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Benwood Initiative, funded by a \$5 million grant to PEF from the Benwood Foundation of Chattanooga with a \$2.5 million PEF match, seeks to have every student reading at grade level by the third grade; the percentage of students reading at grade level by third grade is increasing dramatically, due to strong teaching through training of classroom teachers in reading instruction, hiring specialists and coaches, leadership coaches for principals, and the recruitment, training and retention of excellent teachers; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 Hamilton County Report Card showing the TVAAS and CRT results for the nine Benwood schools indicated dramatic “all A” scores for Donaldson Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Howard Elementary, Orchard Knob and particularly Hardy Elementary, which previously had been among the lowest ranking schools in the state; and

WHEREAS, the Osborne Fellows Initiative was created to provide 100 committed Benwood teachers with a free master’s degree focused on reading, instructional strategies for urban learners, and other topics relevant to the needs of their students; the initiative was developed with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and funded in 2003 with a \$1.5 million five-year grant from the W.H. Osborne Foundation of Chattanooga to PEF and a \$500,000 matching PEF grant; and

WHEREAS, Osborne Fellows, a team taught by UTC faculty, outside experts and Hamilton County master teachers and administrators, undertake courses focusing in actual challenges that teachers in Benwood schools face; the Osborne Fellows develop a common body of knowledge by working together for two years in seminars and study groups held in Benwood classrooms, rather than being incorporated into a larger university student body. Indications are that Osborne Fellows are already sharing their learning with their faculties and the level of teaching is on a steady rise; and

WHEREAS, the dramatic accomplishments of the Public Education Foundation, and its associated Benwood Initiative and Osborne Fellows Initiative, clearly hold great promise for education in Chattanooga-Hamilton County as demonstrated by unmistakable signs of progress; this success is due not only to the commitment of leadership in the local government, business and educational communities, but in no small way to the excellent leadership provided by Dr. Daniel Challener, President of the Public Education Foundation; Corinne Allen, Executive

Director of the Benwood Foundation; and Glenn Stophel, President of the Weldon F. Osborne Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the goals and efforts undertaken for the improvement of education in Chattanooga-Hamilton County and the commitment of participating teachers and school administrators is embodied in a poem entitled "For Other Than Glory", written March 21, 2005 by Ms. Eunice Goolsby, as follows:

*Not for fame or fortune  
You decided to extend  
Your substance and your hand  
And to these children become their friends.*

*Not for fame nor glory  
Did you come into their lives  
Only to bestow a vision  
And to quicken their every stride.*

*On towards the mark  
Your goal for them was to succeed  
By living the example of the scripture that says  
"It's better to give than to receive."*

*Of yourselves you've given leadership  
With quality unsurpassed  
Becoming mentor, mover and motivator  
Whatever we needed, we had only to ask.*

*And for your time and effort  
Their futures will tell the story  
Because each of your selfless acts  
Were rendered for other than glory.*

WHEREAS, these ambitious and highly effective programs and initiatives are worthy of high regard by other communities as well as the thanks and commendation of this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby offer our heartfelt admiration for the visionary commitment to the education of the youth of Chattanooga-Hamilton County embodied in the Public Education Foundation and its associated Benwood Initiative and Osborne Fellows Initiative, praise the leadership demonstrated by governmental, business and education leaders in the community,

and express our thanks to the Benwood Foundation and the W. F. Osborne Foundation for their critical participation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we commend the outstanding leadership demonstrated by Dr. Daniel Challener, President of the Public Education Foundation; Corinne Allen, Executive Director of the Benwood Foundation; and Glenn Stophel, president of the Weldon F. Osborne Foundation, and offer each of them our best wishes for every success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.